

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of Roosevelt County, New Mexico, which was formed on February 28, 1903. The citizens of Roosevelt County this year are celebrating the many virtues of their wonderful community. Roosevelt County is a good place to call home. It has outstanding schools, safe streets, family oriented neighborhoods, civic volunteerism and community values that make it an exceptional place to live and raise a family. We have much to celebrate on this centennial.

Roosevelt County was named for the twenty-sixth President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who enlisted New Mexican Rough Riders when he climbed San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. The city of Portales is the county seat. Other communities in the county include: Elida, Floyd, Dora, Causey, Arch, Kenna, Lingo, Milnesand, Pep, and Rogers. Roosevelt County is located on the high plains of eastern New Mexico in the heart of cattle country, with ranching, farming, the dairy industry, and the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railway comprising important components of the community's economic base. Located 11 miles to the northeast of Portales is Cannon Air Force Base, which adds a very important dimension to the character of the area.

Roosevelt County was cultivated by ranching, farming, the railroad and related businesses over a hundred years ago. In 1902 a few homesteaders settled in; a year later, the homesteaders were arriving more increasingly in the area around Portales. Settlers were drawn to Roosevelt County due to the access of the railroad and the availability of shallow water. A homesteader could take a pick and shovel and dig a well of about 15 feet deep and would have plenty of water for domestic use. Most other settlers outside the Portales Valley had to haul drinking water from a few wells made by ranchers, until they could afford to drill their own. It is hard to imagine the availability of that much water now, which Roosevelt County considers its most precious natural resource.

The name "Portales" fits this charming university town even more today than when it was coined in the 1800s. Named for a nearby campsite where spring waters gushed from a series of cave-like porches across pueblo-style houses, Portales, or "Porches" in Spanish, is an entryway into New Mexico on the eastern border. Portales Springs is the most famous watering hole on the Old Fort Sumner Trail and often welcomed Billy the Kid and his partners during the infamous Lincoln County War.

Agriculture is the major industry of Roosevelt County. The leading crops are Valencia peanuts, alfalfa, cotton, wheat, corn, milo, hay, and potatoes. Valencia peanuts, noted for their sweet taste, are exported all across the United States as well as to several countries around the world. Roosevelt County is home to the only peanut butter manufacturing facility in New Mexico. Additionally, its peanut butter is currently ranked the fifth highest quality

peanut butter on the market today by Consumer Reports.

Livestock feeding and dairy farming are also important to the local economy. Other industries include soft drink canners, an ethanol production facility, grain storage and shipping, trucking and milk processing. The dairy industry is the second largest agricultural industry in New Mexico, and our state is the nation's seventh largest producer of milk.

Portales is the proud home to Eastern New Mexico University, the third largest university in the Land of Enchantment, offering over 50 undergraduate and 15 graduate majors. The university offers a broad curriculum of vocational, technical and academic disciplines and is the center of the region's cultural life. The school has brought many opportunities to graduates since 1934. In conjunction with the city, the university sponsors an annual Peanut Valley Festival that provides excitement and entertainment for the community and attracts hundreds of visitors each year. I had the opportunity earlier this week to meet with the president of the university, Dr. Steven Gamble, to receive an update on the progress the institution is making. The residents of eastern New Mexico are fortunate to have such a fine place of higher learning in their midst.

On this grand occasion, I want to express my best wishes to Portales Mayor Orlando Ortega and all the local elected officials throughout Roosevelt County that are determined to make this area an even better place to live and raise families. The elected county officials are as follows: Dennis Lopez, District 1 Commissioner; Charles Davis, District 2 Commissioner; Thomas Clark, District 3 Commissioner; Gene Creighton, District 4 Commissioner; Paul Grider, District 5 Commissioner; Nancy Gentry, Probate Judge; Tom Gossett, County Sheriff; Nancy Belcher, Treasurer; Royene Tivis, Assessor; and Joyce Lee Frazee, County Clerk. I pledge to continue to work with these leaders to promote an atmosphere in which economic development can flourish.

The signs of Roosevelt County's progress are evident. President Bush recently approved the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill containing \$250,000 to continue the development of the Ute Reservoir Pipeline, which is critical for the sustained growth and water needs of this area. We have a long way to go on this project, but this funding is a crucial step forward.

Citizens have also seen fit to finance the construction of the Roosevelt General Hospital. Costing nearly nine million dollars, this facility is serving the health needs of local residents. The new Portales Junior High School was recently built to replace a decaying 75th year-old facility. A new Communications Center is being built at Eastern New Mexico University, and the local library in Portales has recently been upgraded with new technology and a more modern, usable facility. Finally, there is the new Portales Recreation Center, which will serve scores of local youth and give them a safe environment to have fun and learn. All of these improvements were financed by voters through local elections and other contributions from local neighbors.

The people of Roosevelt County have a past to be proud of, and a future that continues to unveil promising opportunities. The pull of the future is only as good as the past that empowers it, and in Roosevelt County a fine and solid history lays a well-lit path for the future.

Mr. Speaker, Roosevelt County is one of the finest regions in the State of New Mexico. This area is symbolic of traditional American values. The residents work hard, are dedicated to their families, support their schools and volunteer to help their neighbors. I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing all its residents continued success as their community enters its second century.

CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to help commemorate a month-long learning experience that all of us as Americans should join in celebrating. This month we focus on recalling and embracing a unique part of our American History and the roles of African Americans in shaping what our country is today. History teaches us that every culture and every society endures good and bad, and it is essential that we continue to learn from our past.

From slavery abolitionists like Harriett Tubman to civil rights activists like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—even students like the Little Rock Nine who showed unimaginable courage—we have much to learn from the lives of these past and present leaders. They leave quite a mark on the pages of our history books and in the fabric of our country.

During this month, it is important that we seek to learn more about historical Black figures; it is important because it shows us what great contributions they made even during an era when many people thought Blacks had nothing to offer. Quite to the contrary—the African American community has given us some of our greatest writers, inventors, athletes, philosophers, musicians, and spiritual and community leaders during dark times in our history.

It is during this month that Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, Toni Morrison, and baseball great Hank Aaron celebrated their birthdays. It was during this month in 1870 that the 15th Amendment was passed, granting Blacks the right to vote. And this year, during this month, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Anderson, who was lost on the Space Shuttle *Columbia*, died as a pioneer and a living symbol of the progress African Americans have made and the successes yet to come.

Black History Month celebrates people and events that were disregarded for long periods of time. It's time we remember. It's time we make Black history our history.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS DAY,
FEBRUARY 28, 2003

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate National Peace Corps Day and recognize the Peace Corps for its stellar record of achievement throughout the past five decades. The Peace Corps has become an enduring symbol of our nation's commitment to encourage progress, create opportunity and expand